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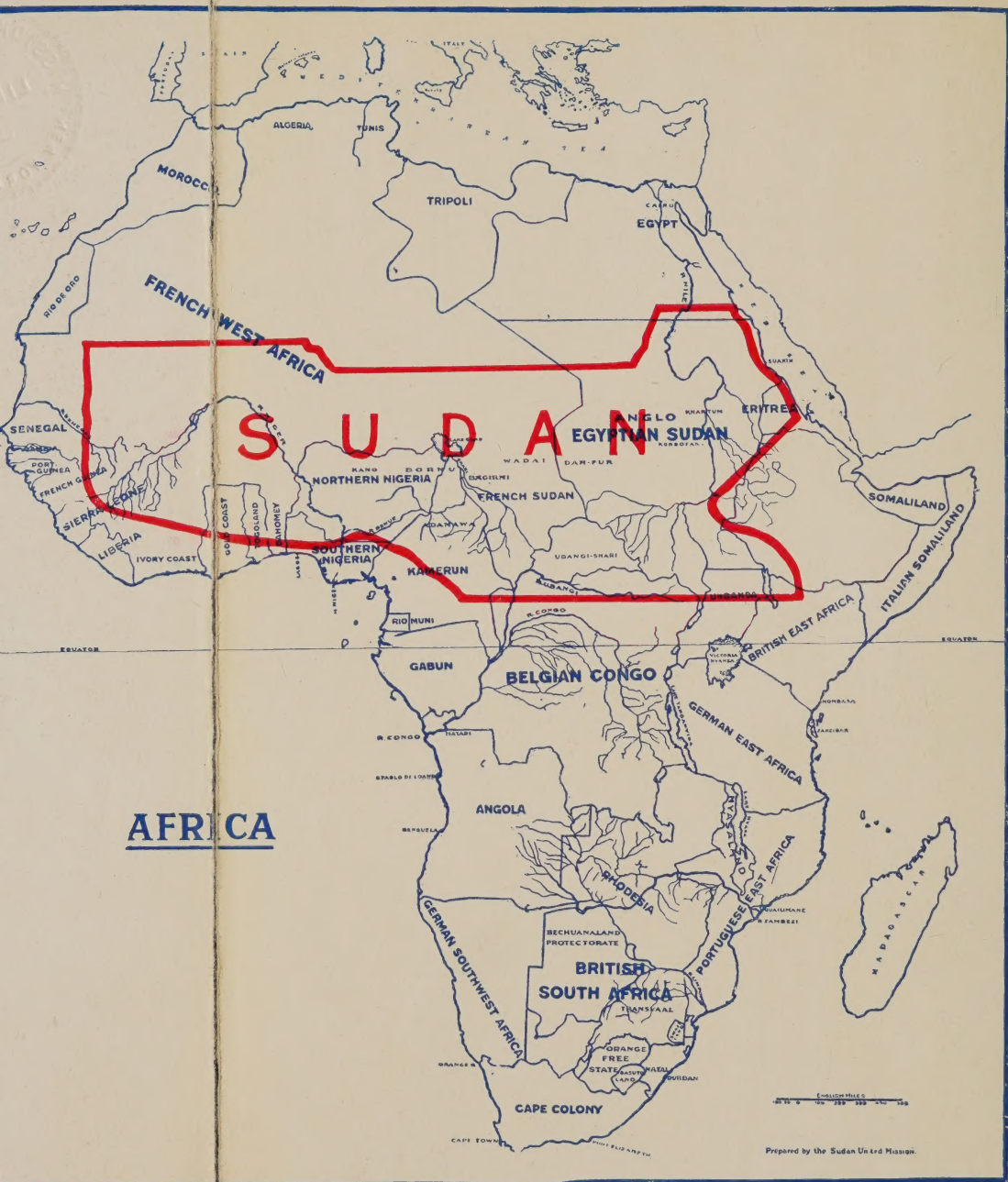
Africa - North
Sudan

Crane, Denis

"A Challenge"

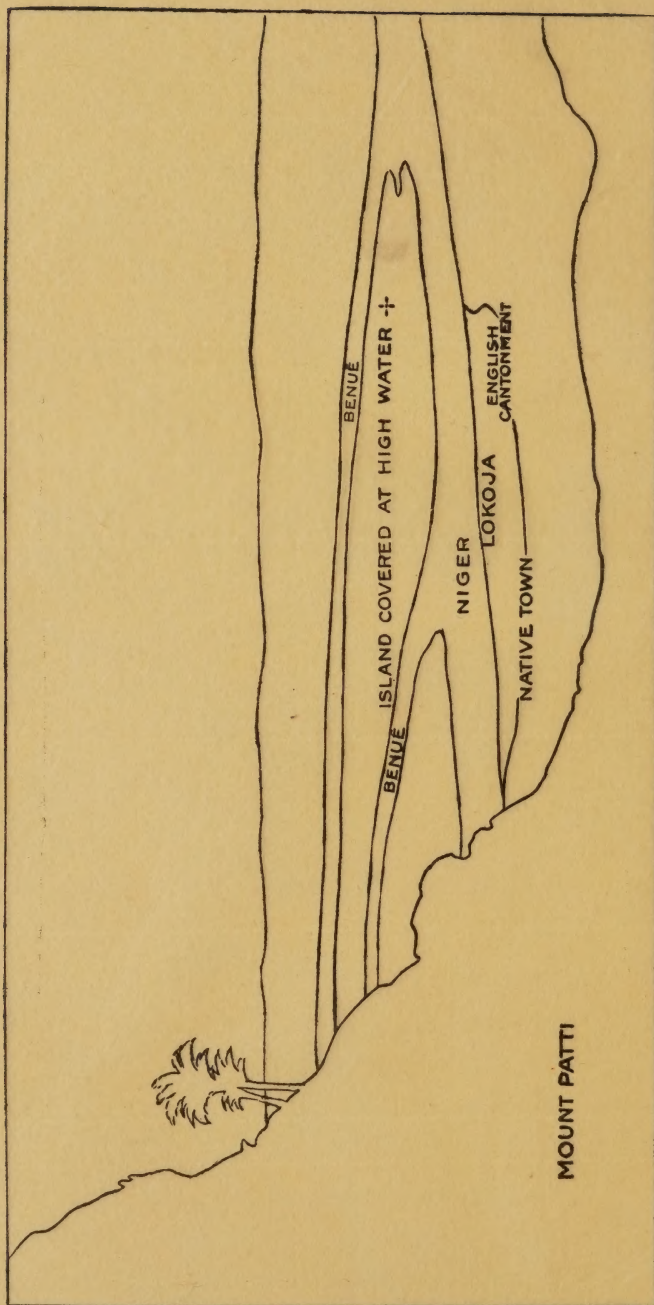


ALBERT
MORRIS





Described as the most ancient dance in Northern Nigeria: the Hoe Dance, given before Sir Frederick Lugard.



FROM A PAINTING BY
WM. J. W. ROOME.

VIEW OF THE CONFLUENCE OF NIGER AND BENUE.

†-† THE RIVER
RISES 30 FT IN THE
WET SEASON

A CHALLENGE!

Shall we Surrender the Sudan?



BY

DENIS CRANE,

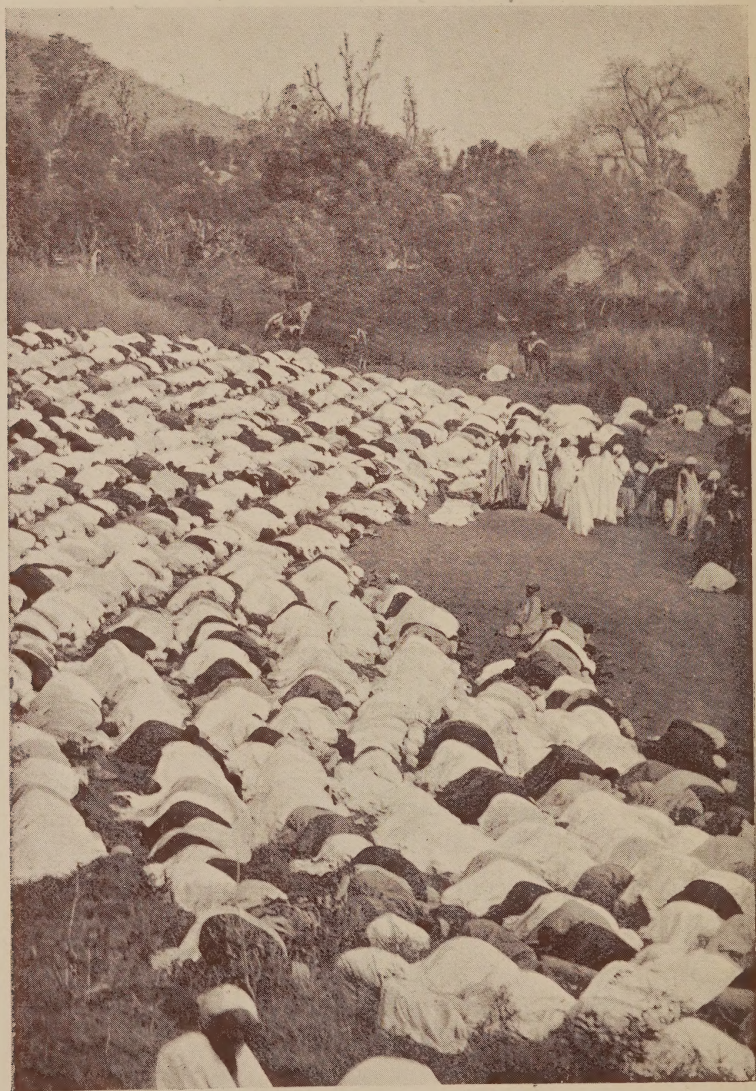
Author of "John Bull's Surplus Children,"

"A Vicarious Vagabond,"

&c., &c.



SUDAN UNITED MISSION,
16, New Bridge Street, LONDON, E.C.4.



Shall we Surrender the Sudan?



CHAPTER I.

The Green Peril.

“THE romantic age of foreign missions has passed never to return. The scream of the locomotive and the throbbing of the automobile have sounded the death-knell of romance for explorer and pioneer missionary alike.”

This opinion of a recent writer is shared by a large and unthinking multitude at home. To hear them bemoan the flight of romance and adventure one would imagine that all the dark places of the earth had been lighted with electricity and that in no corner of the globe was a man out of sound of the gramophone, or half an hour's walk from a picture palace. They would seem to believe that even the Dark Continent has yielded up her secrets, and that the long arm of civilisation has torn away the curtain of mystery which once hung over the heart of Africa.

Twenty-five Millions Untouched.

Yet it is a fact that at this moment in the Sudan alone there are twenty-five millions of people who are practically untouched by European civilisation and in whose territory not a single mission station has been established. The romance of missions dead? With a score and a-half million black pagans unreached? The notion is fantastically absurd. Within the area of the Sudan a thousand thrilling adventures and a host of unveiled secrets await the coming of the pioneers of the Cross.

It is the province of this little book to reveal the vast potentialities of the Sudan as a field of missionary enterprise, and the vital importance to the whole future of world evangelisation of seizing the present opportunity.

Mention the word Sudan in the middle-aged Englishman's ear and it conjures up a vista of tragic episodes played against a background of sandy desert and gleaming Nile. Pictures flit across his memory of the Mahdi and his fanatical hosts; of the little red column of British soldiers toiling up the cataracts, vainly racing against time; of the lonely figure of General Gordon meeting his death at Khartoum; and of the final crushing of the brave dervish hordes under the fire of Kitchener's machine guns and magazine rifles at Omdurman.

The Real Sudan.

But Bilad-es-Sudan—"The Land of the Blacks"—denotes a far more comprehensive area than the theatre of the rise and fall of the Mahdi.

Take a map of Africa and with a red-ink pen trace a line round the territory bounded by the great Sahara Desert on the north, by the basin of the Congo River on the south, by the Nile and Abyssinia on the east, and by a line running due north from Lagos on the west. Within that red line you will have a huge oblong block of territory covering nearly two million square miles, straddling across almost the whole breadth of the Dark Continent, and effectually cutting off the North from Central Africa. This



solid block is the Sudan, comprehending not only Anglo-Egyptian and French Sudan, but Adamawa (German territory until the War), Northern Nigeria and the Upper Senegal region.

For Africa, the Sudan is a well-populated country. Its inhabitants number between forty and forty-five millions. For untold generations savage man, wild beast and Nature, red in tooth and claw, have vied with each other to decimate it. Inter-tribal strife, Arab slave-raids, hunger, disease and the depredations of lion, leopard and snake, have waged unbroken war against



the birth-rate. It says much for the virility of the negro that the race has persisted in face of all these perils. The stern struggle for existence has produced a folk vigorous and crafty, hardy in physique and sturdy in character. In short, a people whose future under the influence of a Christian civilisation is full of promise.

There are some races which have been so crushed by servile conditions and so broken by the struggle for life that they seem destined to perpetual dependence. The negroes of the Sudan are not such. They are magnificent raw material which, under the guidance of European influences, will inevitably play a great part in moulding the Africa of to-morrow.

That in itself is a compelling motive for the effort to evangelise them. But there is an additional reason for carrying the Gospel of Christ to the inner Sudan at the earliest moment.

The Open Sesame.

Until a score of years ago entrance to this vast region was barred to all except the intrepid explorer. Travel was arduous, if not impossible.

The warfare between tribes and the constant raids of the slave-dealers made life in these wilds a mere hazard. But in the closing years of the nineteenth century a succession of events prepared the way for the heralds of the Cross, much as the magic "Open Sesame" flung wide the portals of rock to the wood-

cutter of Baghdad. These events were the smashing of the Khalifa's power at Omdurman by Lord Kitchener, the occupation of Nigeria by the British Government, and the defeat of the Moslem chiefs at Wadai and elsewhere.

The results have been rapid and far-reaching. Law and order have superseded the clashing rivalries of neighbouring tribes. The death-knell of the terrible trade in "black ivory" has been sounded. No longer may bands of Arab raiders, armed with European weapons of precision, burst in upon hapless villages and take their toll of human flesh and blood. The strong arm of the European Powers has imposed peace and a settled administration upon these sorely harried regions. Trade routes have been opened up, and the people are learning the advantages of commerce over internecine warfare; the means of communication are being increased and improved. Under the protection of the Union Jack and the Tricolour, the missionary may now make his way into the hinterland with comparatively small risk of life, and with encouraging prospects of establishing permanent centres of Christian influence.

The Green Peril.

So much for the credit side. But there is another aspect of the changed conditions which must not be overlooked and which is charged with menace. Not very long ago, many minds in Europe were exercised about the "Yellow Peril." The menace which broods over the Sudan and over Africa in general, as the thunder cloud lowers over the summer landscape, is the "Green Peril"—the threatening advance of the banner of Islam.



So long as the slave trade was uninterrupted in these regions the Moslem was the enemy of the pagan. He came in the guise of the raider, bringing death to the warrior and hideous servitude to the woman and child. To the pagan, Islam stood for the "sum of all villainies," to be withstood to the death. Whilst this feeling existed there was little danger of pagan tribes falling under the influence of the religion of their cruel exploiters. But the destruction of the slave trade and the opening of trade routes under



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European administration have wrought a momentous change. The former raider has become the trader. The Mohammedan trader, protected by the European Powers, may travel anywhere in security. His coming brings to the native undreamed-of prospects of wealth by profitable exchange; to the men, agricultural implements and weapons, to the women, cotton goods and trinkets. The Mohammedan is no longer the harbinger of a dreadful fate: he is the purveyor of all covetable things. Hence the old antagonism is subsiding and the doctrines of the Prophet are



penetrating the country in the wake of the smooth-tongued trader.

So long as he could reap the immense profits of the slave trade and procure servile labour for the great markets of the East, the Moslem had no incentive to missionary propaganda among the pagans of Africa. On the contrary, there was a decided deterrent, for the law of Islam prohibits the enslavement of the faithful. But when the traffic in human flesh was abolished, the desire to proselytise became paramount. Remember that every Moslem trader is a missionary; remember also, that close on the heels of the trader treads the Mohammedan teacher, and you will have the measure of the peril which threatens the Sudan. Its peoples have merely exchanged the menace of bodily servitude for the more insidious, more deadening thralldom of the soul.

To those who know little of the real character of Mohammedanism, conversion from paganism to the faith of Islam may seem a step in the right direction. It is, at any rate, say they, the substitution of belief in one God for the worship of evil spirits.

An Anti-Christian Faith.

If Mohammedanism were the only alternative, the plea might have countenance. But there is Christianity, with its claim to world-wide supremacy. And the greatest bar to that is Islam. Mohammedanism is not merely non-Christian: it is anti-Christian. When a pagan accepts Islam his mind is poisoned against Christ. It is infinitely more arduous to evangelise a Moslemised than a pagan community. Economically it is the most expensive and the least fruitful form of missionary effort. If great tracts of Africa, such as the Sudan, are allowed through indifference or timidity to fall under Moslem influence, Christianity will presently find itself confronted by a Hindenburg Line which will defy its utmost efforts to break through.

Moreover, the ethical standards of Islam are little higher than those of the heathenism they supersede. Sometimes, indeed, they are lower. The two potent factors of Moslem success in Africa are moral laxity and fatalism. The prohibition of alcohol contained in the Koran is not enforced. Islam allows full scope to sexual immorality of the most depraved kind; and the Moslem standard of truth is extremely elastic. The negro, weak of will, is drawn to a religion which does not hold him responsible for his acts. The Mohammedan faith allows him to retain much of his old "Ju-Ju" and fetish worship. "The 'heathen Moslem'" writes a missionary

who has closely studied the effects of Mohammedan proselytism, "does not remain a heathen, but he retains much of his heathen superstitions, and to these he adds the Moslem ones."



From the double standpoint of the Christian faith and of civilisation, the case against Islam in Africa is, in fact, overwhelming. But there is one other consideration that must be taken into reckoning—the Imperial and European aspect. Moslem civilisation and religion are essentially Asiatic and anti-European. Wherever the Mohammedan missionary

pénetrates he sows the seeds of the Pan-Islamic idea. The Pan-Islamic idea aims at the gathering of all the Moslem forces into a political union, in preparation for a final war with the infidel, especially him of the Christian faith. The Mahdi-hope, which has repeatedly incited the nations of the Eastern Sudan to revolt and bloodshed, wanders southward with the Moslem missions. It is easy for the Mohammedan priests to lead the people into fanatical insurrections against Christian Colonial Governments. The supremacy of Islam in Africa means the continuance of those fanatical struggles which, all down the ages, have saturated her soil with blood.

Such, then, is the moral and religious condition of the Northern and Central Sudan to-day. Over this section of the Dark Continent hangs a flaming interrogation—*The Crescent or the Cross?* For an answer to that insistent query, no member of the Christian Churches of this country can evade his share of responsibility.



CHAPTER II.

The Birth of a Mission.

“THE threatening advance of Islam in Equatorial Africa presents to the Church of Christ the decisive question whether the Dark Continent shall become Mohammedan or Christian.”

In that arresting alternative the Edinburgh Missionary Conference focussed the situation in the Sudan, sketched in the preceding chapter. An overwhelming consensus of expert opinion, that the countries menaced by Islam constitute the most urgent of all mission problems, brought the matter to a head. The Sudan was the largest slice of unevangelised territory in the world. What was to be done?

In 1904, counsel was taken of the British Churches. One after another the great Missionary Societies not already represented in this part of Africa were appealed to. All made the same reply. They were already overburdened with responsibilities for the fields they occupied, and their resources in men and money were inadequate for new undertakings. All they could promise was sympathy and co-operation in a united movement.

Their sincerity was proved by the joint action of the principal Free Church Societies, whose secretaries signed a resolution inviting the Nonconformist Churches to join in a united enterprise. The suggestion promptly materialised and was cordially endorsed by leading missionary supporters in the Churches of England and Ireland. Thus was conceived a united missionary society directly representing the evangelical Churches of the kingdom—surely a notable step towards Christian reunion—a movement first begun on the mission field.



In this manner
From all the the Sudan United
Churches. Mission had its

birth on June 15,
1904, in the Session Room of United
Free St. George's Church, Edin-
burgh. Its mandate was to rescue
the Sudan from the menace of the
Crescent by firmly planting there
the Banner of the Cross. Its con-
stitution was established on a wide
interdenominational basis. Control
is vested in a Board of Directors,
who are of three classes: founda-
tion, representative and elected. A
glance at their names will reveal
the essentially representative charac-
ter of the administration. Among
Foundation Directors are Dr. Monro
Gibson, of the Presbyterian Church of

England, and an ex-President of the Free Church Council; Dr.
R. F. Horton, the famous pastor of Hampstead Congregational
Church; the Very Rev. James C. Russell, ex-Moderator of the
General Assembly of the Church of Scotland; Prebendary Webb-
Peploe, lately Vicar of St. Paul's, Onslow Square, London; Mr.
Robert Whyte, and Sir Andrew Wingate, K.C.I.E. The Repre-
sentative Directors are the Rev. W. Y. Fullerton, of the Baptist
Missionary Society; the Rev. Marshall Hartley, of the Wesleyan
Missionary Society; Mr. F. H. Hawkins, of the London Missionary
Society; the Rev. J. Hughes, of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist
Church; and the Rev. Dr. Ogilvie, of the Church of Scotland
Missionary Committee.

An
International
Mission.

But the S.U.M. has another distinctive character-
istic. It is not merely interdenominational; it is
also international. Branches have been estab-
lished in South Africa, Australia, New Zealand,
and the United States. In 1912 the scope was

still further extended by the co-operation of friends in Denmark
interested in African mission effort. Arrangements were made for
the division of the Mission's area of work into spheres of occupation





for the missionaries of each of these branches, and to-day, under the general control of the S.U.M., American, South African, Danish, Australian and New Zealand missionaries are engaged in the evangelisation of the Sudan. The doctrinal basis of the S.U.M. is that of the Evangelical Alliance.

Pioneer operations were begun in 1904. At present the Mission occupies two main spheres of operation—Northern Nigeria and the Eastern Sudan. In the former, the Mission has ten stations and several out-stations, reaching directly eleven different tribes. In the Eastern Sudan two stations have been opened.

Access to most of the Northern Nigerian stations is obtained through Forcados, at the mouth of the Niger. A steamer conveys the traveller from the coast to Lokoja, some 350 miles upstream, where the Benuë unites with the Niger. It is in the belt watered by the Benuë—a level plain, covered with long grass, marshy in places and dotted with ragged bush—that the stations of the S.U.M. have been established. The stations actually on the Benuë are Ibi, about 250 miles from Lokoja, and Numan, the outpost of the Mission in Nigeria, 200 miles further upstream. South of the Benuë lie healthier and more picturesque uplands, where the Mission has stations at Wukari and Donga. North of the river the land rises to the foothills of the Murchison Range. At the base of the latter

are Langtang and Pil, two more of the Mission stations. Beyond the mountains stretch the high bare plains of the plateau district, long reaches of rolling meadow from which the granite outcrop springs up in the form of miniature fortresses. Here are Du and Forum, the most northerly of the posts occupied by the S.U.M. In the plains, the presence of the tsetse fly forbids the keeping of horses, and away from the steamers and canoes on the Benuë, the missionary must travel on foot, in a hammock carried by bearers, or by cycle. In the plateau district and at Langtang, Numan and Wukari, horses can live.

The climate in the low-lying stations is trying to Europeans, the mean temperature being 80 degrees in the shade and 110 in the sun. Malaria and yellow fever are rife, and white missionaries need frequent furloughs. On the plateau the climate is healthier, but the sudden changes from severe cold to great heat are a strain to a constitution unused to such variations.

The native population of Northern Nigeria is about nine and a half millions. The inhabitants are divided into a large number of tribes, varying in development and civilisation. In the centre and south they are mainly pagan, and very primitive. In the north there are several large Moslem tribes with a certain degree of organisation, development, and civilisation. Moslem colonies are also scattered throughout the pagan districts.



The Pagan Tribes.

It is with the pagan tribes that the S.U.M. is mainly concerned. Almost all speak a different language, but Hausa is fairly widespread in the Northern provinces. In most cases, two languages at least must be learned by each missionary. The prevailing occupation is agriculture. The natives are strong and thrifty, raising with unwearying industry and by primitive methods, crops of millet, maize, and rice. In the more fertile regions near the Benuë, Indian corn, sweet potatoes, ground nuts, yams, and cassava are cultivated. The men are usually good hunters, yet meat is a rare luxury, and the flesh of the lion, leopard, or hyena is a delicacy reserved for chiefs. Dogs, monkeys,

snakes, lizards, and rats also figure in the native menu.

Of the eleven tribes reached through the Nigerian stations, the most important are the Jukun, Yergum, Burum, Munshi, Bachama, and Arago. Each has its distinctive characteristics.

The Jukun Tribe.

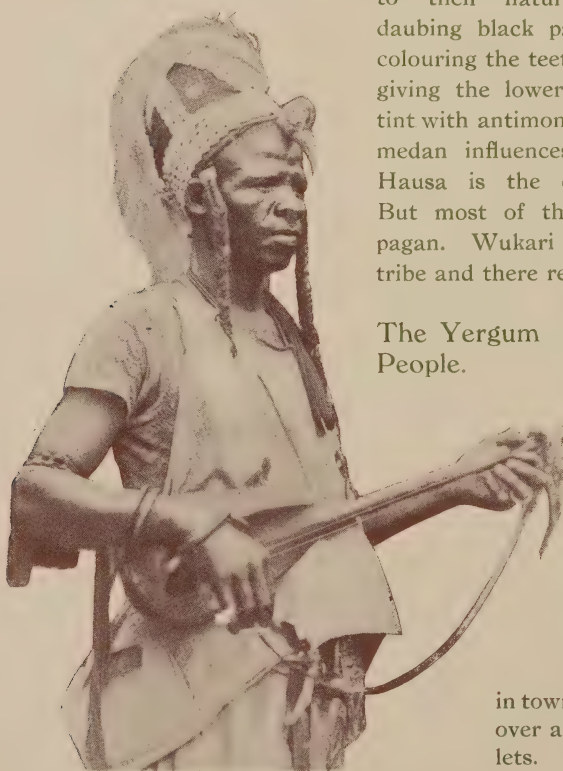
The Jukun tribe were once the most powerful in this part of Africa, but their glory has long departed. They are happy and good-natured, with a marked sense of humour. Many of the women are handsome, have a good carriage, and dress remarkably well. Fashion ordains that they should add

to their natural attractions by daubing black paint over the face, colouring the teeth black or red, and giving the lower eyelids a blueish tint with antimony. At Ibi, Moham-medan influences are strong, and Hausa is the common language. But most of the Jukuns are still pagan. Wukari is the capital of the tribe and there resides the "king."

The Yergum People.

The Yergum, who inhabit the plain at the foot of the Murchison Mountains, with Langtang as their principal centre, are a fine pagan tribe who have so far held out against the Moslem menace.

They do not live in towns, but are scattered over a large area in hamlets. Their women are





of a strong, hardy, and independent type, clean in their habits, and careful to wash their babies twice a day. They wear their hair in a kind of cockscomb, the sides of the head being close shaven. The subjection of womenkind is a contested article of their creed. If a wife deems herself slighted by her husband she goes on strike and declines to prepare his food. Force being no remedy, the hungry man has recourse to spiritual weapons. The woman, believing the uproar to proceed from evil spirits, prepares food to appease

them, and the husband undertakes to convey it to the required spot. Thus honour and appetite are alike satisfied. The men are inclined to imitate the Moslem style of dress, and among the younger folk there is a tendency to break from the old animistic superstitions and to reach out for something to take their place.

Not very long ago cannibalism was openly practised among the Yergum. Indeed, a small boy of thirteen in the employment of a S.U.M. missionary described to his master a cannibal feast in which he had taken part. Some people from a neighbouring town were surrounded, killed and eaten. Meat was so plentiful that even the boys had portions, and the narrator received



his share. He assured the missionary that the hands and feet are real delicacies. Under British rule this ghastly custom has been brought to an end, or, if practised, is only carried on with the utmost secrecy.

A Naked Race.

A striking contrast to the Jukun and Yergum people is the Burum tribe, who dwell in the Bauchi Plateau in the northernmost sector of the area occupied by the S.U.M. Cut off from association with other tribes, they are much more primitive. They wear no dress save a sheepskin, hanging from the shoulders down the back; and it is amazing how they can be almost insensible to the scorching rays of the tropical sun, the fearful hail storms and bitter winds that sweep across their plains. Their land is closely populated and they industriously cultivate the soil. Children who display disinclination to work are frequently sold out of the tribe. The return of the people from their six days' continuous toil is a memorable sight. First come the droves of sheep and goats, kept together by boys with bows and blunted arrows, which they shoot just beyond the straying animal to drive it back to its flock. After them stream the men, women and girls, singing, laughing and chattering of how they will spend their two days' rest—of the dances they will have, and of the beads, bangles and red clay with which they will bedeck themselves and swagger round the town. And, bringing up the rear, a troop of mounted boys, with big loads of grass balanced on their heads or across the withers of their horses.





Their work has been to convey food daily to the toilers on the farms.

The principal towns of the Burum are Du and Forum, where the stations of the Mission are situated. Here the Moslem menace comes not in the form of trade, for these people have little intercourse with the outer world, but from the advance into the district of European tin-mining companies, employing Mohammedan labour.

Of the Munshi, the largest and most virile pagan tribe in Northern Nigeria, nothing need be said, for the two stations which the S.U.M. established among them have been handed over by agreement to the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa.

A One-Legged People.

But the most distinctive and remarkable people within the sphere of the Mission are the Dinkas, of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, among whom the Australian Branch is labouring. The Dinkas are proud and independent, being comparatively rich, especially in cattle. A curious characteristic is their habit of standing on one leg—a trick which led to their ancestors being described by Herodotus as a one-legged race. Balanced by his spear stuck in the ground, the Dinka cowherd will stand for hours together on one foot, the other foot placed in the hollow just above the knee. The practice was probably adopted on account of the

long grass of the Dinka country. Seated, the herdsman would be unable to see his cattle, while the scout would fail to perceive the approach of his foe.

Another curious custom, which inflicts a severe handicap on foreigners wishing to learn the Dinka language, is that of knocking out the front lower teeth of every boy at the age of eight. This alters the shape of the mouth considerably and causes the upper incisors to protrude. Unless the missionary is willing to submit to the same process he can never obtain a correct accent. Clothing the Dinkas dispense with entirely, wearing simply a string of beads round the head and arms. The men smear over their bodies a coating of white ash, made from burnt cattle dung. Otherwise they are a fine-looking folk, and a few years ago, before British authority repressed their instincts, were famous warriors. The inland Dinkas are almost entirely pagan; but those who settle in the river centres speedily succumb to Mohammedan influences, and the steady invasion of Moslems from the north is a real danger.



A Religion of Fear.

When we speak of tribes being pagan, what exactly do we mean? So far as

Central Africa is concerned, the native religion is purely animistic. The Supreme Being—known by such titles as “The One Above,” and “The Originator,” who made all things—has relinquished the management of the world to inferior spirits, mostly malignant. Religion to the African thus becomes a matter of placating a host of invisible enemies, forever seeking to work harm to him and his. In other words, it is a religion of fear. Life becomes an enslavement, all the more tyrannical because the taskmasters are unseen. The general name for these spirits is Boka or Busu; often they are supposed to be the spirits of

departed relatives. But relationship in no way modifies their malignity. Thus it is ignorant to talk, as some critics of Christian missions do, of the happiness of the African in his natural state. He is hag-ridden by his pagan fears, and happy only when absorbed in play or work.

Ordeal by Poison.

According to native ideas there is no such thing as death from natural causes. Belief in witchcraft is deep-rooted, and sedulously cultivated by the witch doctors, who live upon it. When a

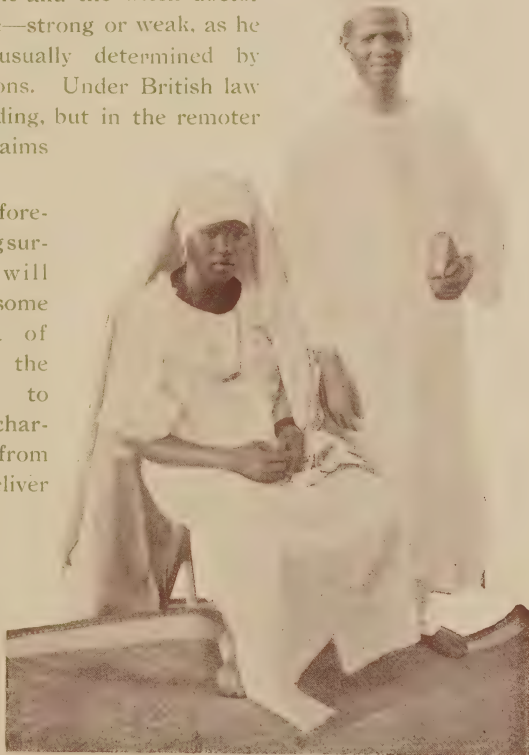
native dies the witch doctor is summoned to find the guilty man or woman. If he has any old score to wipe off, or lack of deference to avenge, the victim is soon found. If no personal animus exists, the least considerable member of the community is selected and invited to undergo the ordeal by poison. If he plead innocence and refuse the ordeal, public opinion soon proves an effective constraint and the witch doctor administers the dose—strong or weak, as he may choose, and usually determined by financial considerations. Under British law this custom is subsiding, but in the remoter regions it still claims many victims.

What the S.U.M. has Done.

The foregoing survey will give some idea of

the people whom the S.U.M. is seeking to evangelise, and the character of the beliefs from which it is sought to deliver them.

Let us now examine what the Mission has accomplished in the fifteen years of its existence. The staff consists of fifty-one mission-



aries and several native evangelists in Nigeria, and six missionaries in the Eastern Sudan. The greater part of the work is purely evangelistic, consisting of preaching and teaching tours from selected centres. Medical work is also done so far as the resources of the S.U.M. allow. Four of the European staff in Nigeria are medical missionaries. In Nigeria there are also two important institutions: a Freed Slaves' Home and a Native Agents' Training Institution. The Freed Slaves' Home was established in 1909 at the request of the Nigerian Government, which, since then, has sent considerably over 200 freed slave children to be brought up and educated by the Mission. The Government will continue this practice until slavery has been entirely suppressed. The system of education pursued in the Home is based on the wise principle that the children should be trained to take their place in native life, and not become mere hangers-on of the European community. The children are therefore housed, not in one large building of the European type, but in native huts like those in which they will spend their lives. No English is taught, but knowledge of the Hausa language is imparted, and boys and girls alike are thoroughly trained in farming, building, roof-making and weaving. Christian instruction is, of course, fundamental.



As the children grow up they are transferred to other stations, where they act as the missionary's personal attendants and helpers, receiving in this way further training and education, with a view, so far as the boys are concerned, to their entering the Training Institute and becoming evangelists. The girls become acquainted with Christian boys, and thus solve one of the acute problems of pioneer missionary work—the provision of Christian wives for native evangelists and leaders. By this means an educated Christian community is being gradually built up, which will form the firm foundation of the larger Church of the future. The Home is situated at Wukari.

Africa Evangelised by Africans.

The main aim of the Sudan United Mission is by rapid and immediate evangelisation to forestall the

Moslems in their efforts to absorb the tribes of the interior. Obviously, to effect this by European agency would require an impossible expenditure of men and money. The directors of the Mission believe it is both more economical and more effective to use native evangelists under European supervision, and to this end established at Wukari a Training Institute. Here native Christians, of whatever tribe, may be equipped for carrying the Gospel to their own people. A year in residence is followed by twelve months on an out-station to test and further develop their capabilities. They then return to the Institute for a final course. As in the case of the Freed Slaves' Home, everything is discouraged that would make the students unwilling to live in the native fashion, or estrange them from their relatives and friends. Africa evangelised by Africans is the ideal steadily pursued.



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Schools are set up at each mission station and considerable success is attending this branch of the work. But here again extension is conditioned by the supply of trained native teachers. When these are available rapid advance will ensue.

Pioneer Work.

To sum up a necessarily brief record, the Mission is now reaching directly twelve tribes; its agents have reduced to writing five languages, exclusive of dialects; and Gospels and reading primers

have been published therein. So far all has been pioneering; which means the breaking down of prejudice, the disarming of fear and suspicion, the awakening of interest, the winning of friendship. Something like 50,000 medical treatments are given annually; there are over 60,000 school attendances, and 157,000 attendances at preaching services. These figures give some idea of the Mission's scope, but are mere shadows of what might be if it were adequately equipped.

CHAPTER III.

Cross or Crescent?

THE world has grown accustomed in these days to thinking in terms of strategy. The Great War familiarised us with the spectacle of vast defensive lines, fortified with every artifice that the scientific mind could devise. In the warfare of the Cross, also, strategic ideas are being applied, and the Hindenburg Line has pointed the way to the most effective defence against the warriors of the Crescent. Another lesson the War has driven deep into the minds of missionary statesmen is, the supreme value of unity of command. The foundations of that unity were laid at the great World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910, and the idea has rapidly developed.

One of the main decisions of the Edinburgh World Missionary Conference was that *the Continent of Africa is the region upon which present efforts must be chiefly concentrated to meet the advance of Islam*. This view was carried still further at a united Missionary Conference at Lucknow, in 1912. The gathering of experts agreed that concerted action among missionary boards was necessary to co-ordinate the forces now at work in Africa, and to regulate their distribution in such a manner as "*to provide a strong chain of mission stations across Africa, the strongest links of which shall be at those points where Moslem advance is most active.*"



"They shall not Pass!" In the two italicised sentences we have the missionary adaptation of unity of command and the Hindenburg Line to the situation in Africa.

The task of carrying it into effect falls upon the Sudan United Mission. Upon it, to a predominant degree, devolves the responsibility for the erection and manning of an impregnable barrier to the advance of Islam upon the pagan tribes of Central Africa. *On ne passera pas!* muttered between clenched teeth the valiant French *poilus*, when the German Crown Prince's hosts swarmed against Verdun, and the proudest regiments of the Prussian Army spent their strength vainly in the attempt to advance that way. "They shall not pass!" might well be the motto of the S.U.M., resolute as it is to oppose the subjugation of the Dark Continent by the Sons of the Prophet.

Between the advanced stations of the S.U.M. at Numan, in Nigeria, and at Melut, in the Eastern Sudan, stretch fourteen hundred miles of totally unevangelised country. The one European missionary who has traversed this vast region estimates the population at twenty-five million pagans. Their peaceful penetration by Moslem traders, and the material advantages derived therefrom, will inevitably efface the rankling memory of bygone Moslem cruelties. Their conversion to Mohammedanism will then be an easy task. At the moment the tribes are well disposed to the Christian teacher. If the Moslem propagandist arrives first, it will change all this to an attitude definitely anti-Christian.

"I wanted Something!" The old pagan beliefs and customs are crumbling before the advance of civilisation; but in the spiritual as in the physical world Nature abhors a vacuum. Something must fill the empty room from which the devil of Paganism has been evicted. Listen to this incident from a missionary's log-book; it is symptomatic of the attitude of the pagan tribes in general.

"There was a young man in Donga—a fine, tall, intelligent young fellow, who had thrown in his lot with the Mohammedan section, and, of course, wore their charms and attended their 'Salla.' He was asked why he followed the Prophet. He answered, 'What could I do? I wanted something, and no one else came to tell me, so I believed them.' This fine young man has been lost because someone has tarried. Many more will be likewise lost if

the Christians still tarry. This young fellow is just one among millions in this land 'longing for something.'"

The S.U.M. Programme.

The programme of the S.U.M. is, therefore, to man forty stations along the strategic line between Numan and Melut. For this purpose at least a hundred and twenty more missionaries, and a capital sum of £50,000 are required, together with an annual income of £30,000 for maintenance. In the meantime, careful preliminary investigations have been made and a forward movement of a less ambitious order is to be set on foot. This comprises the opening of eight new stations among pagan tribes hitherto untouched. The site of each station has been chosen for its strategic value in counteracting the Moslem advance. To carry even this limited programme into effect between fifteen and twenty new missionaries are required, and a capital sum of £7,000 for the first year, and an income of £5,250 for the succeeding years.



Two Rival Civilisations.

These are large demands to make at the close of four and a half years of exhausting war. Only the urgency of the call emboldens the directors of the S.U.M. to make it at this hour. They fully recognise it is only as the Holy Spirit lays that call upon the hearts of Christian people that either the men or the money will be forthcoming. Nevertheless, they appeal with confidence to the British public and to their kinsmen in the Colonies and the United States to come to their assistance. Two considerations impel this course. The first is obedience to the Divine command to evangelise all nations. The second is the necessity for the triumph of Western civilisation over the rival civilisation of the East. Africa is undoubtedly the cockpit of the struggle for ascendancy between them. With Islam victorious in the Sudan, African civilisation will be of the

Eastern type—immeasurably inferior, when all is said. In Western civilisation is something infinitely precious. It is indefinable, but it includes all that sense of proportion and beauty, that recognition of the supremacy of reason and of spirit, that came from Greece; that enthronement of order and equity, that grave authoritative sanction of the written word, that architectural poise and balance, that came from Rome; that moral restraint and, above all, that conviction of the inestimable and infinite value of the individual human soul and its inalienable right to freedom, which are the unique gifts of the Christian Faith. Remember, the whole social structure of Asia is based on the negation of the freedom and value of the individual. Its moral code is absolutely unacceptable to the West. Its attitude to freedom of thought and to the reign of public right and law, its view of women and the home—all are in direct antagonism to Western ideals.

The
Pan-Islamic
Menace.

Finally, there remains the immensely important point of settled peace in Africa, under which the forces of progress may develop undisturbed. Mohammedanism covers the seething passions of fanaticism, which, suppressed for the moment, may at any time burst the barriers in an attempt to overthrow European authority. The priests and teachers of Islam are ever looking towards Stambul for the coming of the great prince with an unconquerable army to overthrow the white man. Even the negroes on Lake Victoria, in East Central Africa, are taught to expect that the Sultan will some day expel from their land the European Powers. The ex-Kaiser failed signally in his attempt to rouse a *jihad*, or war of religion, against the Entente Powers in India and North Africa; but if the greater part of the African Continent had been Moslemised in 1914, the whole region might easily have been set aflame.

The triumph of the Allies in the world war and the downfall of Turkey deal a far-resounding blow to the power of Islam and to the influence of the Pan-Islamic idea. This makes the present moment of immense strategic value for an offensive against Mohammedan influence in Africa. Islam will rally again; but the science of war teaches that the time to deal the heaviest blow is while the enemy is reeling. All the most recent world-developments increase the urgency of the appeal of the Sudan United Mission. We are face to face with the opportunity of a century. A great

door and an effectual is open. Given resolution and a new sense of stewardship—of wealth, of life, of influence—on the part of Christian people, and Ethiopia will yet be won for Christ.

Cross or
Crescent?

To every reader of this booklet the question is put: Are you shouldering your responsibility for the liberation of Central Africa from the thralldom of paganism and the menace of Islam? To accept that responsibility, and to act in accordance with the tremendous issues involved, means sacrifice. Life and treasure must be spent freely. We dare not hold back; the call is so clear, so true. Let your answer take the form of an immediate offer of help—by gift or personal service—addressed to the

SUDAN UNITED MISSION,

16, New Bridge Street, London, E.C. 4.

